DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 415 486 CS 013 009

AUTHOR Senechal, Monique; LeFevre, Jo-Anne; Thomas, Eleanor; Daley, Karen E.

TITLE Early Exposure to Storybooks as a Predictor of Reading in Grade 1.

PUB DATE 1996-08-00

NOTE 4p.; Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development (Quebec City, Quebec, Canada, August 1996).

PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Emergent Literacy; Family Influence; Foreign Countries; Grade 1; *Parent Participation; Predictor Variables; Primary Education; Reading Achievement; Reading Aloud to Others; Reading Research; *Reading Skills; Regression (Statistics); *Story Reading; *Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

A study examined whether storybook exposure and the amount of teaching in reading and writing skills provided by parents would enhance the language skills and emergent literacy of 47 first-grade children. Hierarchical regression analyses that controlled for parents' print exposure, and children's age and analytical intelligence showed that at the beginning of grade 1, storybook exposure explained significant unique variance in children's language skills but not in their emergent literacy, whereas parent teaching explained significant unique variance in children's emergent literacy but not in their language skills. Findings suggest that storybook exposure may have a direct impact on children's language skills whereas additional support in the form of teaching is necessary to enhance emergent literacy. At the end of grade 1, children's language and emergent literacy performance accounted for 20% of the variance in word reading, but storybook exposure and parent teaching did not account for additional significant unique variance. Findings suggest that the long term influence of early home literacy experiences is mediated through children's language skills and emergent literacy. (Contains three tables of data and two figures which illustrate frameworks of relations between home literacy experiences and child outcomes. An appendix contains a list of the four child measures used.) (Author/RS)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 415 486

# EARLY EXPOSURE TO STORYBOOKS AS A PREDICTOR OF READING IN GRADE 1

Monique Sénéchal, Jo-Anne LeFevre, Eleanor Thomas, and Karen E. Daley
*Carleton University*, CANADA

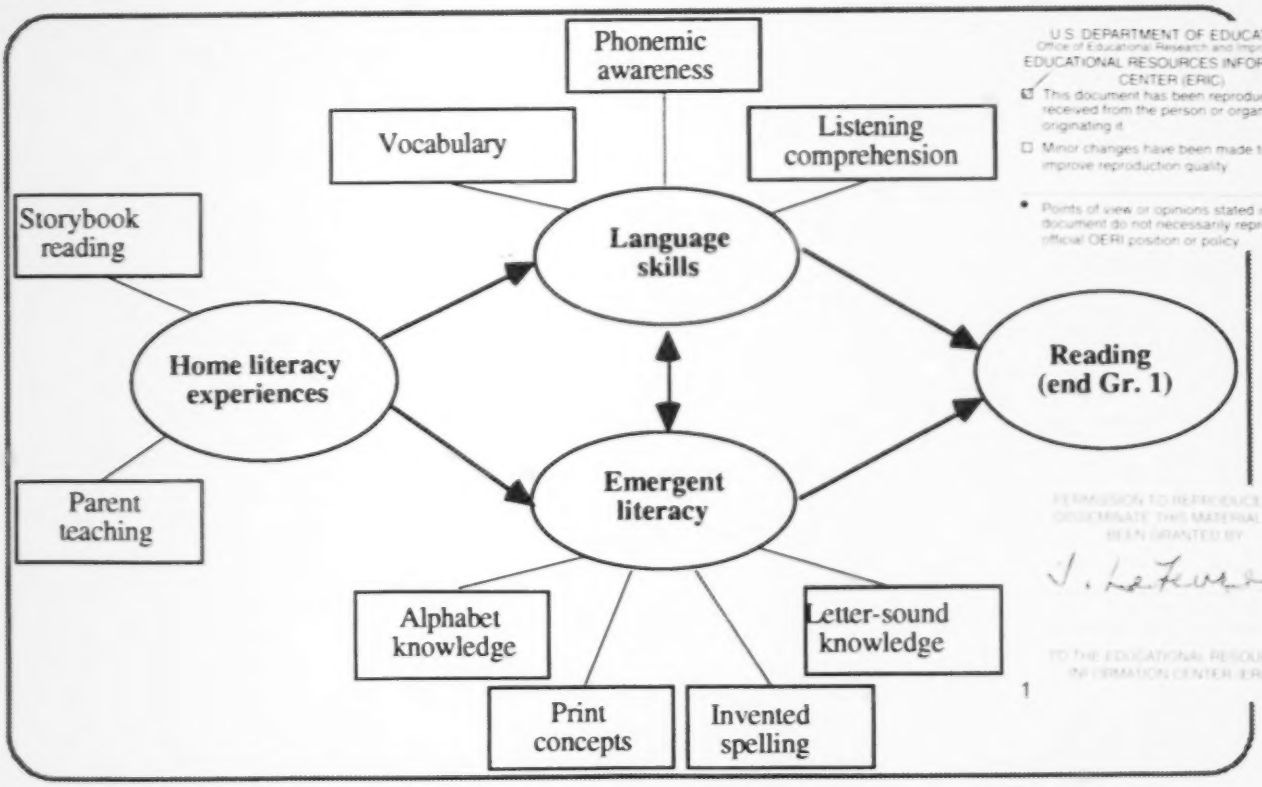
We examined whether storybook exposure and the amount of teaching in reading and writing skills provided by parents would enhance the language skills and emergent literacy of Grade 1 children ($N = 47$). Hierarchical regression analyses that controlled for parents' print exposure, and children's age and analytic intelligence showed that at the beginning of Grade 1, storybook exposure explained significant unique variance in children's language skills but not in their emergent literacy, whereas parent teaching explained significant unique variance in children's emergent literacy but not in their language skills. These findings suggest that storybook exposure may have a direct impact on children's language skills whereas additional support in the form of teaching is necessary to enhance emergent literacy. At the end of Grade 1, children's language and emergent literacy performance accounted for 20% of the variance in word reading but storybook exposure and parent teaching did not account for additional significant unique variance. These findings suggest that the long term influence of early home literacy experiences is mediated through children's language skills and emergent literacy.

Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of ISSBD, Québec City, August 1996.
Contact: M. Sénéchal, Department of Psychology, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON, K1S 5B6, Canada.

## INTRODUCTION

Children enter Grade 1 with a variety of skills that may facilitate their acquisition of reading. In particular, children's language skills (e.g., vocabulary, phonemic awareness) and emergent literacy (e.g., knowing the names or sounds of letters, understanding print concepts) have been associated with later reading achievement.

In the present study, we assessed two kinds of home literacy experiences: storybook reading and direct teaching about reading and printing by parents. We evaluated the complex relations among early home literacy experiences, developing language skills, emergent literacy skills, and early reading achievement, as illustrated in the framework in Figure 1.




U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. LeFevre
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

*Figure 1. Framework of the Relations between Home Literacy Experiences and Child Outcomes.*

CS 013009



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

## METHOD

Information about home literacy experiences was collected from parents in the fall: Storybook exposure and parent print exposure were measured using parental checklists (Sénéchal et al., 1996) and parent teaching was measured with self-reports of the frequency with which parents taught reading and spelling.

Forty-seven children (*M* age = 6 years 5 months) were tested individually on language and emergent literacy measures, and children were also given a standardized test of their word identification performance near the end of the school year. We used composite factor scores to index language and emergent literacy and tested for the direct and indirect influences of storybook exposure and parent teaching on these variables. Tasks were chosen from among those frequently used in the literature. The language factor was assessed using a listening comprehension task, a vocabulary task, and a phonemic awareness task. The emergent literacy factor included letter knowledge, knowledge of print concepts, invented spelling, and letter-sound knowledge (i.e. decoding CVC words).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The means for the child measures are in Table 1.

Table 1
*Means for Each Child Measure (maximum score)*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Language Measures:* | |
| Receptive vocabulary (160) | 108.9 |
| Listening comprehension (30) | 21.7 |
| Phonological awareness (16) | 13.3 |
| *Emergent Literacy Measures:* | |
| Print concepts (10) | 8.8 |
| Alphabet knowledge (15) | 14.2 |
| Invented spelling (40) | 17.4 |
| Decoding CVC words(20) | 13.3 |
| *Reading Measure* at the end of Grade 1 (71) | 47.4 |
| *Analytic Intelligence* (19) | 11.5 |

The results of the study address 3 questions arising from Figure 1.

*1. What is the relation between storybook reading and parent teaching?*

Examination of the descriptive statistics for the home literacy variables revealed that literacy experiences were common (see Table 2). Examination of the correlations revealed that, somewhat unexpectedly, storybook exposure in the home was not associated with parental reports of teaching to read and print words ($r$ = .01). That is, parents who frequently read storybooks did not necessarily teach their child about reading and writing. It appears that parents engage their children in very distinct experiences with print at home: Some experiences provide informal exposure to written language, such as when parents read storybooks, other experiences provide formal exposure to print such as when parents teach about reading and writing.

Table 2
*Means for the Home Literacy Variables*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Storybook Exposure (percentage)* | |
| Children's Titles Checklist (CTC) | 49.9 |
| Children's Authors Checklist (CAC) | 34.2 |
| *Parent Teaching* | |
| Teaches Child to Print [a] | 3.7 |
| Teaches Child to Read [a] | 3.8 |
| *Adult Print Exposure (percentage)* | |
| Adults' Authors Checklist (AAC) | 61.5 |

[a] 1 = never; 2 = seldom; 3 = sometimes; 4 = often; 5 = very often

*2. Do both storybook reading and parent teaching predict language skills and emergent literacy?*

To conduct hierarchical regression analyses, the number of child variables was reduced by computing factor scores for the language and emergent literacy measures. The regression analyses (Table 3) showed that storybook exposure explained significant variance [7% or effect size (*ES*) = .54] in the language factor but not in the emergent literacy factor, whereas parent teaching explained significant variance (6% or *ES* = .52) in the emergent literacy factor but not in the language factor.

These results lend support to the view that parent reading helps to build early language skills, and suggest that this effect continues, at least into Grade 1. We found, however, that the magnitude of the influence of storybook reading on language development was small to moderate.This is in accord with two recent reviews conducted by Bus et al. (1995) and Scarborough and Dobrich (1994).

*3. Do storybook reading and parent teaching predict word reading at the end of Grade 1?*

According to the framework depicted in Figure 1, literacy experiences measured early in the school year would have an indirect impact on children's word reading at the end of the school year. In this analysis, children's language skills and emergent literacy accounted for 20% (*ES* = 1.01) of the variance in word reading. Parent teaching did not account for any additional variance, and storybook exposure accounted for a nonsignificant 2% (*ES* = .29) of the variance in children's word reading. Although this result was not statistically significant, it raises the possibility that storybook exposure (measured in the fall of Grade 1) has a small direct impact on children's reading at the end of Grade 1.

Table 3
*Hierarchical Regression Analyses (N = 47)*

| Criterion<br>Predictor | $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ |
|---|---|---|
| *Language Factor* | | |
| Child age | | .03 |
| Parent print exposure | | .07 |
| Child analytic intelligence | | .32*** |
| Emergent literacy factor | | .07* |
| Parent teaching about words | | .00 |
| Storybook exposure | .55 | .07* |
| *Emergent Literacy Factor* | | |
| Child age | | .15** |
| Parent print exposure | | .00 |
| Child analytic intelligence | | .20*** |
| Child language factor | | .07* |
| Parent teaching about words | | .06* |
| Storybook exposure | .49 | .00 |
| *Reading at the end of Grade 1* | | |
| Child age | | .00 |
| Parent print exposure | | .01 |
| Child analytic intelligence | | .24*** |
| Child lang. & Emergent literacy | | .20** |
| Parent teaching about words | | .00 |
| Storybook exposure | .47 | .02 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

## CONCLUSION

As shown in Figure 2, our results support a clear distinction between the influence of different home literacy experiences: Parent storybook reading enhanced young children's language skills whereas the amount of teaching about reading reported by parents enhanced children's emergent literacy. Thus, storybook reading and parent teaching must be considered as independent experiences, with different links to early skills and, ultimately, to reading acquisition.

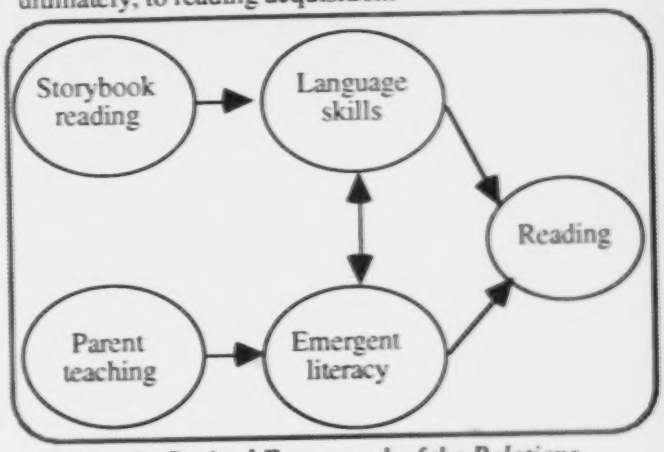



*Figure 2. Revised Framework of the Relations between Home Literacy Experiences and Child Outcomes.*

## REFERENCES

Bus, A. G., van IJzendoorn, M. H., & Pellegrini, A. D. (1995). Joint book reading makes for success in learning to read: A meta-analysis on intergenerational transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research, 65*, 1-21.

Scarborough, H.S., & Dobrich, W. (1994). On the efficacy of reading to preschoolers. *Developmental Review, 14*, 245-302.

Sénéchal, M., LeFevre, J., Hudson, E., & Lawson, P (1996). Knowledge of storybooks as a predictor of young children's vocabulary. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 88(3)*.

## APPENDIX - Child Measures Used

Language Measures: *Vocabulary*. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - Revised (Dunn & Dunn, 1981). *Listening comprehension*. Listening to Stories Subtest of the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (1989). *Phonemic awareness*. Sound Categorization Subtest of the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (1989).

Emergent Literacy Measures: *Print concepts*. Parts of Clay's (1979) The Concept About Print Test. *Alphabet knowledge*. Children were shown 15 letters, one at a time, and asked to identify them. *Emergent spelling*. Children were asked to print 10 words selected to facilitate the use of emergent spelling skills. *Emergent reading*. Children were asked to read two practice words and five CVC target words. Grade 1 Reading Measure. Reading Vocabulary Subtest of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Level A, Form 3, Canadian edition; MacGinitie & MacGinitie, 1989).

Analytic intelligence. Animal House Subtest of the WPPSI-R (Weschler, 1989).